

西田兄妹



心の悲しみ

心の悲しみ  
西田兄妹



青林堂



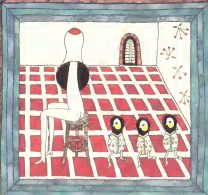
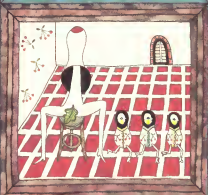
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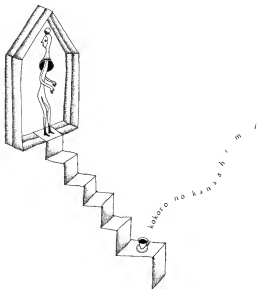






# Sadness of the Heart

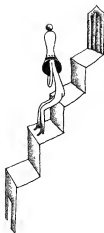
Nishioka  
Brosis





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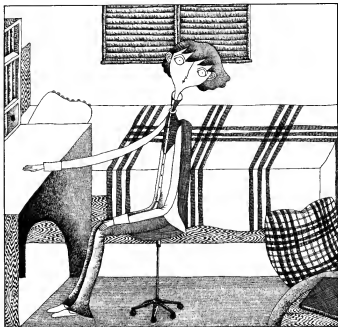


# A Broken Heart



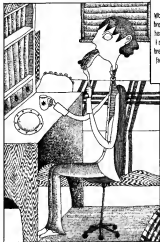
My heart  
broke and  
stopped  
beating

With a  
flick,  
my heart  
broke





With a broken heart,  
I went out for a walk.



With a broken heart,  
I ate breakfast.



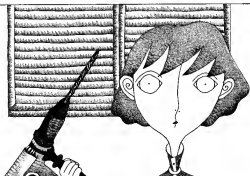
With a broken heart,  
I slept like a log.

I slept better than I ever had before.

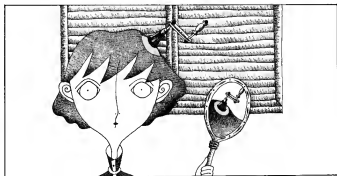
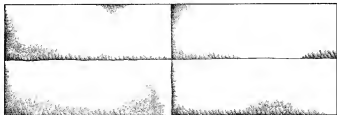


With a broken heart,  
I had fun.

Since I  
had no  
heart,  
I didn't  
hesi-  
tate.



Although  
it had no  
effect on  
my daily  
life, I  
figured it  
was broken,  
so I really  
ought to  
fix it.

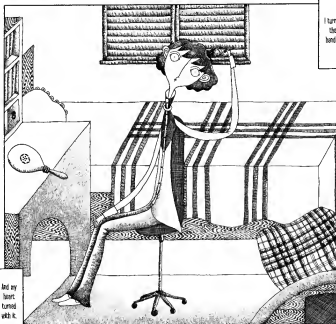




And my  
heart  
turned  
with it.

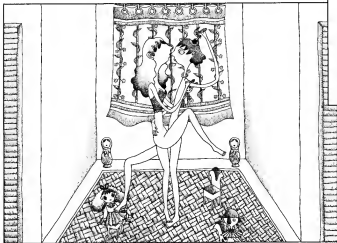
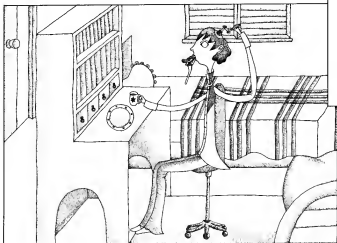


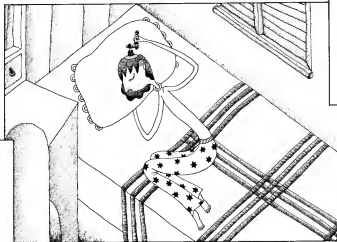
I turned  
the  
handle



I turned  
the  
handle

And my  
heart  
turned  
with it.









THE END

To My  
Children





...to make  
home from  
work.

I swim  
through a  
sea of  
pitch black  
darkness...

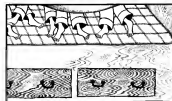


Another  
day  
has  
come  
to a  
close.

...and  
washed  
them  
down  
with a  
cup  
of coffee  
and a  
can  
of beer.

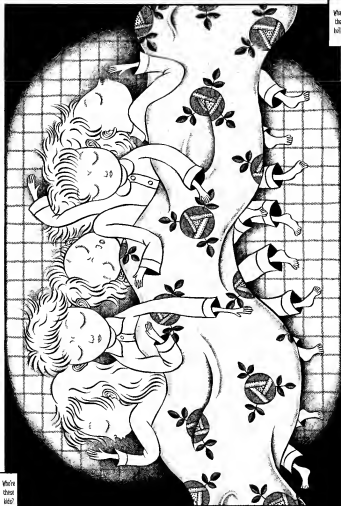


I ate the  
cup noodles  
and the bag  
of sweet  
chestnuts  
I'd bought.

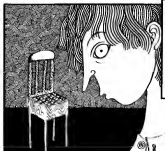


Or so I  
thought.

what  
the  
hell?



what're  
these  
kids?



How I  
can't  
sleep



Who  
would  
do  
such  
an  
awful  
thing?



I'd rather  
have a  
cow eat  
or a pile  
of crap do  
least than  
I could just  
throw it  
away and  
wash the  
sheets

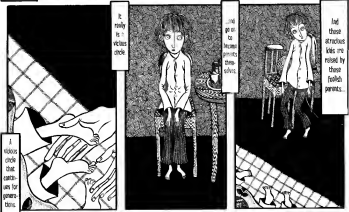
Who on  
earth left  
them here?  
What kind  
of prank  
is this?



They're  
all  
bored  
little  
beats.



I  
hate  
this.



There has  
never been  
anything  
good in  
this world

There is  
nothing  
good  
in this  
world



...in my  
opinion



...is a  
crime  
worse  
than  
murder



...or to  
bring  
a bit  
into  
the  
world  
improving  
this.



And  
parents  
are  
well  
aware  
of this.



...to  
be  
happy



People  
are  
not  
born



They'll  
grow  
up and  
get a  
job



At best  
they'll  
have  
some  
allergies



Every  
kid is  
destined  
to be  
unhappy



And  
then  
they'll  
die

There  
will  
be all  
sorts  
of  
other  
bad  
things



...why don't they commit suicide, why do they keep hanging if all they're going to do is love...



And even if they can't help being born...



Why are kids born?



...and these same kids grow up to have kids of their own...



...and by the time they reached 6th grade ninety percent would have killed themselves.



...half of them would commit suicide...



...courage and common sense of adults.



...if kids had the knowledge and...



...they make other people unhappy as well.



...and because everyone is unhappy...



...and everyone is unhappy...

...and that's why the world never gets any better...



...who would do such a horrible prank anyway. I'd rather have a dead cat or a pile of crap...



...I can't sleep like this and I've got work tomorrow...

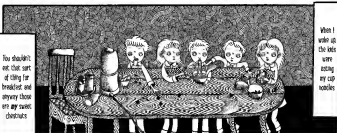


...but why would they do such a horrible thing like this.





Next thing I know, I'd fallen asleep



You shouldn't eat that sort of thing for breakfast, and anyway those are *my* sweet chestnuts

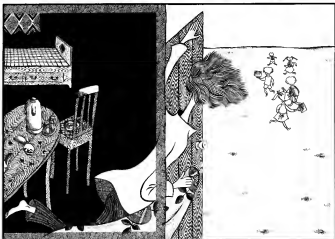
When I woke up the kids were eating my cup noodles





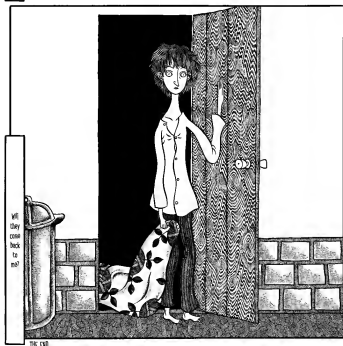
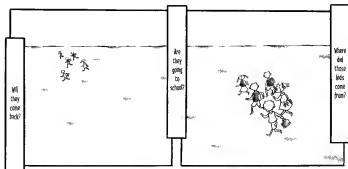
and raced  
out the  
door like  
the wind.

The kids  
hurriedly  
got  
ready...



I  
should  
probably  
get  
dinner  
ready

Maybe I  
should take  
the day off  
I should  
probably  
wash their  
pages

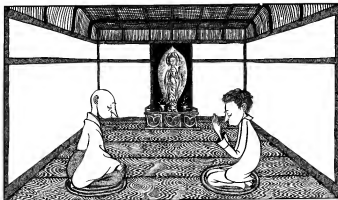


Sadness  
of the  
Heart



*My heart was so, so, so  
sad that I had no choice  
but to consult a priest*



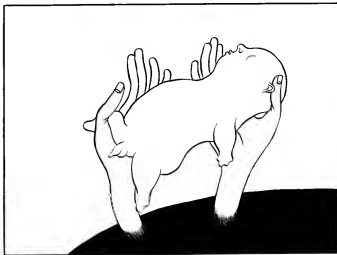


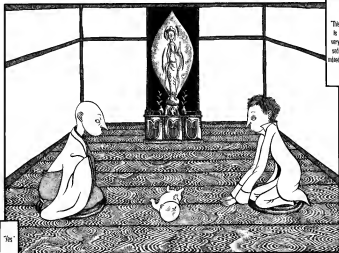
"My heart is sad."



"...and I will take this sadness from you."

"I see. Well then, why don't you show me your heart."





"This is very old indeed!"

"Yes"

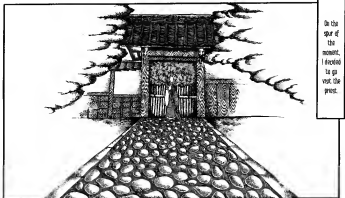




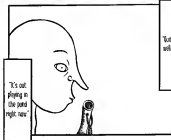
*Two years passed and my  
sadness did indeed disappear.*

*I realized that one could  
live without sadness*

*I also realized that even without sadness,  
there was no guarantee of happiness.*



On the  
spur of  
the  
moment,  
I decided  
to go  
visit the  
priest.

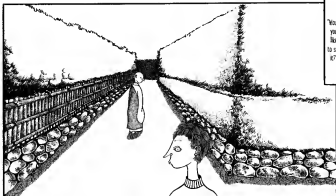


"It's out  
playing in  
the pond  
right now"

"Vote  
well."



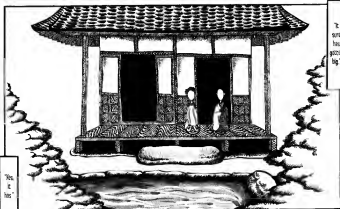
"How  
is it  
doing?"



"Would  
you  
like  
to  
see  
it?"



"It's  
out  
here."



"It sure has gotten big."

"Yes, it has."

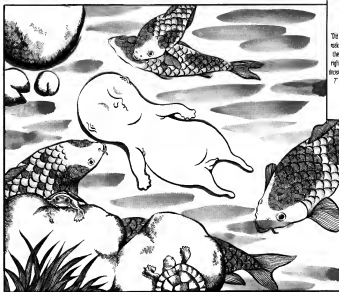


"It's  
playing  
!"



"Yes."







THE END

# Wedding







I  
decided  
I ought  
to get  
married

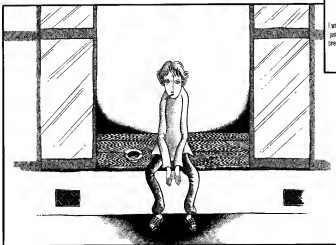


the  
need.

...  
why I  
felt...



Now  
I can't  
even  
remember



I was  
just  
tired.



I've known  
her for quite  
some time,  
but she  
doesn't leave  
much of an  
impression.  
I can't even  
picture her  
face.

I can't  
really  
remember  
what the  
girl looks  
like.



...and can  
no longer  
trust  
children.

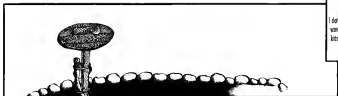


Any-  
way.

I found  
that  
speaking  
and that's  
what made  
me decide  
to marry  
her.

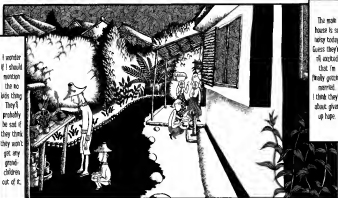
She was  
treated  
badly  
by some  
vishale.

I don't  
want  
bits.



The male  
house is so  
noisy today.  
Guess they're  
all excited  
that I'm  
finally getting  
married.  
I think they'd  
about given  
up hope.

I wonder  
if I should  
mention  
the no  
bits thing.  
They'll  
probably  
be sad if  
they think  
they won't  
get any  
grand-  
children  
out of it.





Some-  
one's  
coming

Who'd  
be  
coming  
over  
now?



He  
intro-  
duced  
himself  
as the  
bride's  
uncle



Thanks for  
coming, but  
I don't know  
anything  
about the  
wedding

You'll  
have to  
risk my  
folks  
over in  
the main  
house.

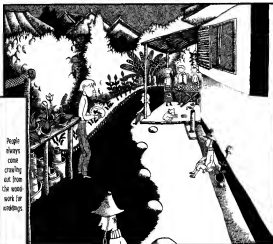


I got rid  
of him as  
politely as  
possible



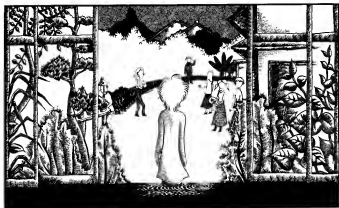
I'm  
getting  
sick of  
this.

But...



People  
always  
come  
crawling  
out from  
the wood-  
work for  
weddings.

What'd  
this guy  
hear about  
my wedding  
anyway?  
I hate that.





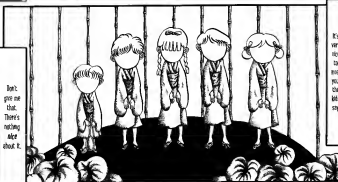
Who, who the hell are all these kids?



I mean, it's not like she criticized me, but I still don't like it.



These are my brothers and sisters, she says.



Don't give me that. There's nothing nice about it.

It's very nice to meet you, she kids say.





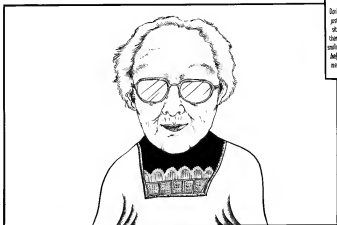
Just  
it  
sure  
is  
okay  
over  
in  
the  
house



I  
get  
that  
they're  
happy  
I'm  
finally  
getting  
married  
but  
this  
is  
over-  
doing  
it.

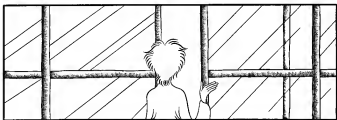
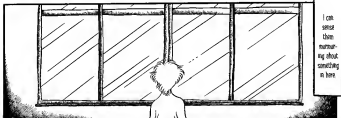


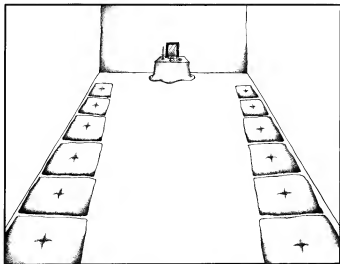
Don't  
just  
sit  
there  
smiling.  
Help  
me.



The naga  
level's  
died down  
a bit, so  
maybe I'll  
go take  
a look.



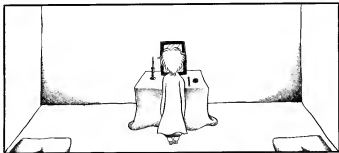
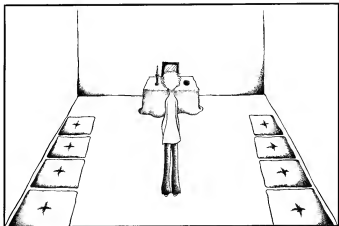




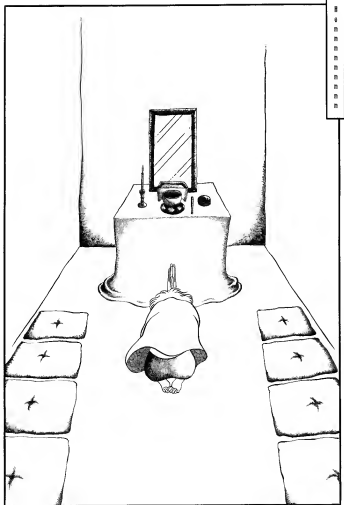
Oh



So  
that's  
it



"Big"



THE END

# Flying





Apparently  
this area  
was once  
used for  
motorcross  
training

I walked  
along the  
unfenced  
bills and  
valleys of  
the red  
clay track.

It felt  
good

Clumps  
of  
purple  
grass  
along-  
side the  
track

Locally it  
had been  
hard to find  
purple at  
the herbal  
shop.

...suddenly  
the  
ground  
disappeared  
beneath  
my  
feet...



As I walked  
along, thinking  
maybe I could  
take it home  
and grow it,  
and make  
some money...



...so  
this  
was a  
new  
discovery

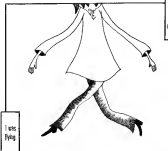
...and  
I was  
floating



Oh

I just hadn't  
noticed the  
downward  
slope,  
that's all





And  
then  
another



I took  
a step



I had  
stepped  
onto  
the  
sky



I flew  
for  
about  
three  
meters

and  
then  
crashed



I practiced  
over  
and  
over...

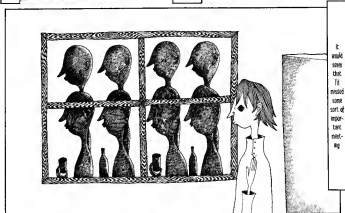
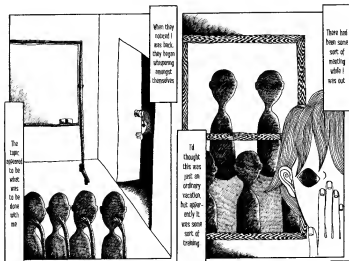


...and  
my  
confi-  
dence  
grew



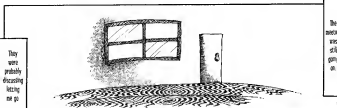
When  
the  
sun  
went  
down  
I re-  
turned  
to my  
belo-  
ngs.

Apparently  
I'd come here  
on vacation  
with my co-  
workers. I'd  
gotten bored  
with card  
games and  
gone out for  
a walk alone





In the morning, I began seriously practicing how to fly.



They were probably discussing letting me go.

The meeting was still going on.



I could probably make a living as a celebrity now, or I could offer flying lessons or something.

That solved my economic problems.



Now that I could fly there was no reason to continue working at my job.



It didn't concern me.

I quickly  
learned  
how to  
control my  
altitude  
and direc-  
tion.

The  
problem  
was  
landing.



It was  
difficult to  
descend  
without  
crashing.

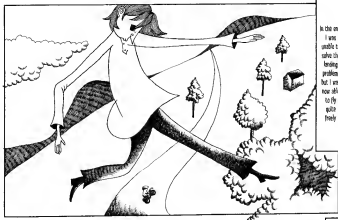
Apparently  
ascending  
was a  
matter of  
will, but  
descending  
was a  
matter of  
emotion.



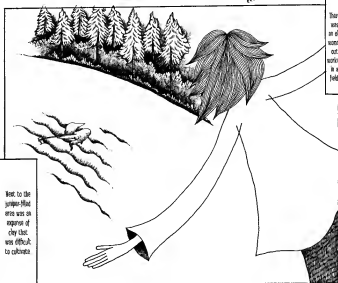
It was  
dangerous  
to fly too  
high.

In order  
to land,  
I needed  
to find  
ground at  
the same  
height at  
which I  
was flying.





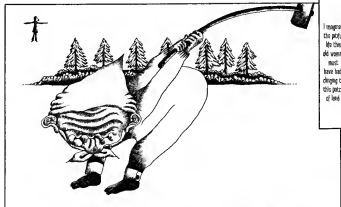
In the end,  
I was  
unable to  
solve the  
herding  
problem.  
But I was  
now able  
to fly  
quite  
freely



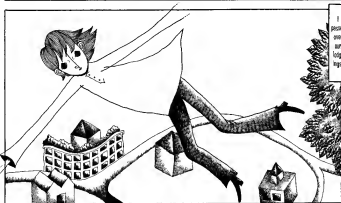
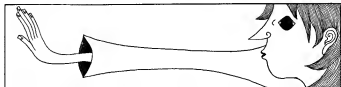
There  
was  
an old  
woman  
out  
working  
in a  
field

Next to the  
juniper-blind  
area was an  
expanse of  
clay that  
was difficult  
to cultivate

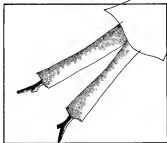
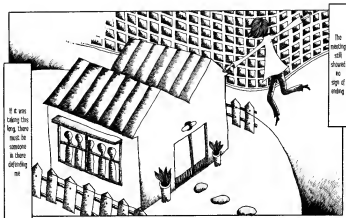


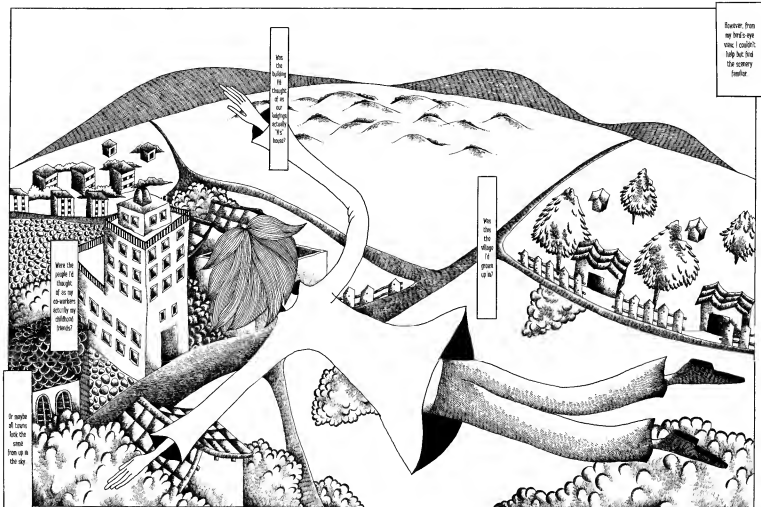


I resigned  
the painful  
life the  
old woman  
must  
have had,  
clinging to  
this patch  
of land



I  
passed  
over  
our  
belong-  
ings





Was the building I'd thought of as our hideout actually "his house"?

However, from my bird's-eye view, I couldn't help but find the scenery familiar.

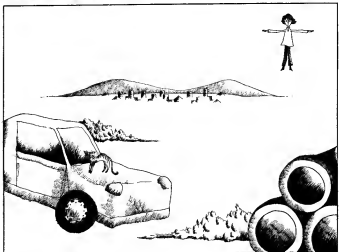
Was the village I'd grown up in?

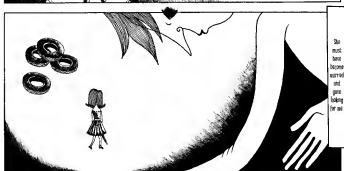
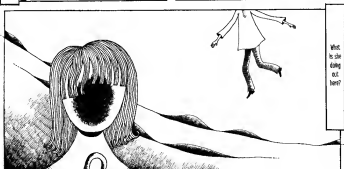
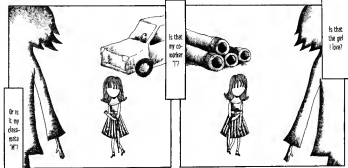
Were the people I'd thought of as my co-workers actually my childhood friends?

Or maybe all towns look the same from up in the sky.

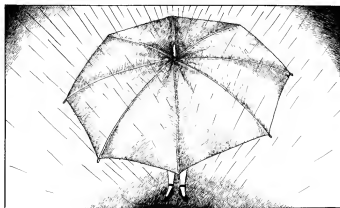
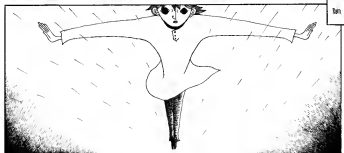
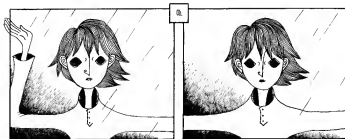


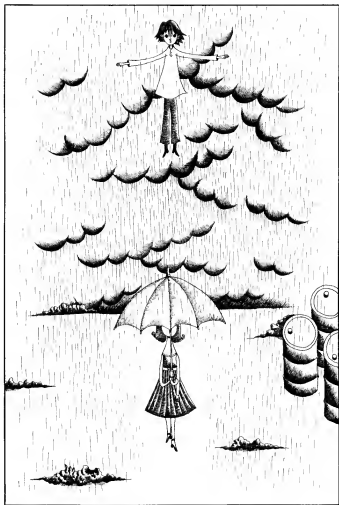
I flew  
across a  
field just  
like the  
one I'd  
played in  
as a child











THE END



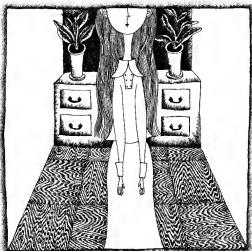
# Snake Woman



She  
kept a  
snake  
in her  
mouth.

I  
had  
no  
nose.





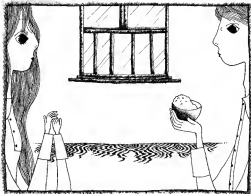
She  
stopped  
talking.  
She  
stopped  
opening  
her  
mouth.

I thought she  
was mad about  
something, so I  
asked her why  
she was mad.



She  
shook  
her head  
as if to  
say, I'm  
not mad.





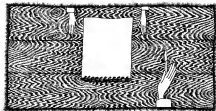
She stopped eating. She continued to cook for me, but then just watched me eat.

I don't like it. We were living together, so we should at least eat together.



I worried she would lose weight. However, days passed and she didn't lose any weight, so I figured she must be eating when I wasn't looking.

It made me sad.



She wouldn't  
open her  
mouth, so  
I tried to  
get her to  
communicate  
in writing

What, on  
earth is the  
matter?  
Why won't  
you open  
your  
mouth?

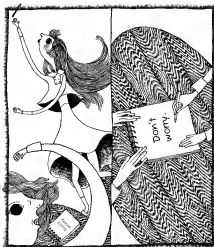


It's nothing, she wrote.

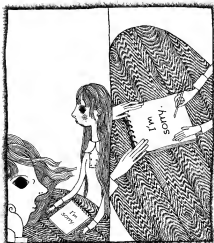
It made no sense, so I hit  
her. How could she say it  
was nothing when I was so  
worried and sad?

Don't worry,  
she wrote.

I hit her again.  
You'll die if you get  
a stuffed-up nose.  
I threatened her.



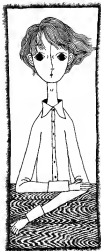
She smiled easily  
I'd never seen a  
woman smile  
after being hit,  
so I hit her once  
more for fun.



I'm sorry  
she wrote

Since she  
apologized,  
I decided I  
wouldn't hit  
her again.

I felt  
better.



She  
looked  
pretty.



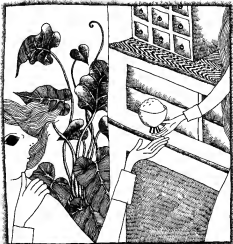
I felt like  
she must  
be hiding  
something. I  
had no idea  
it would be  
so hard to  
live with a  
woman who kept  
secrets.



She didn't  
open her  
mouth. I  
had no idea  
it would be  
so hard to  
live with a  
woman who  
didn't talk.

I didn't  
like it, so  
I decided  
to find  
out what  
she was  
hiding.

I was  
determined  
to catch  
her in the  
act of  
opening  
her mouth.





That night, when  
I pretended to  
sleep, she got  
up and went to  
the kitchen.  
I figured she  
must be hungry.

She  
opened  
the  
fridge  
and  
took  
out a  
fish  
cake.







I couldn't believe she  
was eating fish cakes  
of all things. There's  
nothing sadder than  
a woman eating fish  
cakes in front of the  
fridge in the middle  
of the night.

It  
brought  
tears  
to my  
eyes



Without  
thinking  
I called  
out to  
her



It was a snake

There was a  
snake in her  
mouth eating  
the fish cake



She  
was  
crying  
quietly



Its head was  
triangle-shaped,  
so it was  
probably  
poisonous



I was  
so  
scared,  
I went  
back  
to  
bed



I was  
relieved  
what if  
the snake  
came out  
and bit  
me?



The next  
morning,  
she still  
didn't open  
her mouth.

But I knew  
I would  
live with  
her for  
the rest  
of my life.

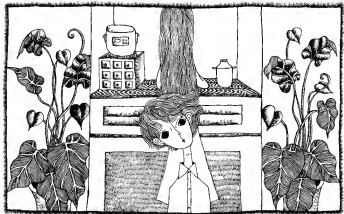


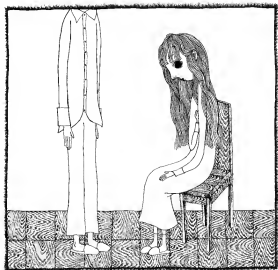
I stopped  
spending  
time I had  
nothing to  
say to a  
woman  
with a  
snake in  
her mouth.



I couldn't  
imagine  
there was  
anyone else  
who would  
look after a  
woman with  
a snake in  
her mouth.

I felt  
sorry  
for her.

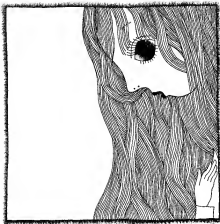




Just a  
moment ago  
she let out  
a strange  
sound.  
Startled, I  
went over  
and saw her  
clutching  
her chest.

She quietly  
opened her  
mouth.

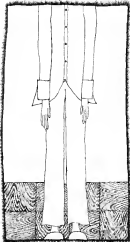
"The snake  
bit me."



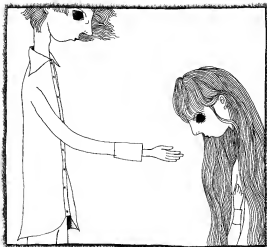
Yes,  
she said



I  
asked  
if it  
hurt.



It was  
our  
first  
conver-  
sation  
in a  
long  
time.





THE END



# God of Death



I was  
scared.

"There's  
no such  
thing."

"What  
about  
hell?"

"There's  
no such  
thing."

"What  
about  
heaven?"

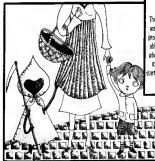
"They  
have  
died."

"What  
happens  
when  
people  
die?"

I asked my  
mother.



I was  
still  
very  
young.



That  
was  
probably  
when  
it  
started.



And  
out  
of  
the  
blue,  
he  
would  
say...

He  
was  
always  
with  
me.



"You're  
going  
to  
die  
soon.  
It  
won't  
be  
long."



And I  
don't do  
but...



I got  
dear

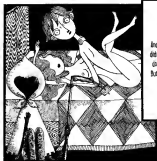


And  
out of  
the blue,  
he would  
say...

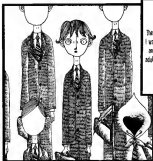
he  
was  
always  
with me



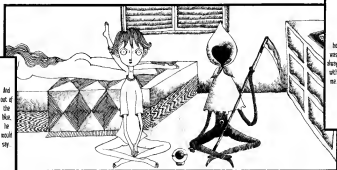
...You're  
going to  
die soon.  
It won't  
be long.



And I  
didn't die  
but.



Then  
I was an  
adult.

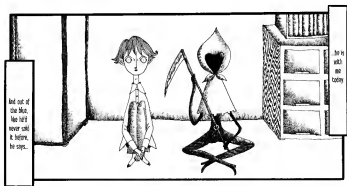
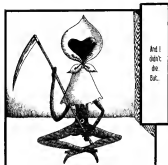


And out of  
the blue,  
he would  
sly.

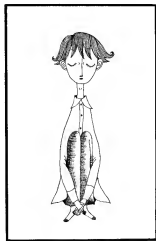
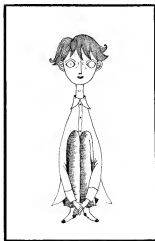
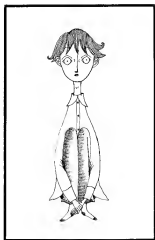
he  
was  
always  
with  
me.

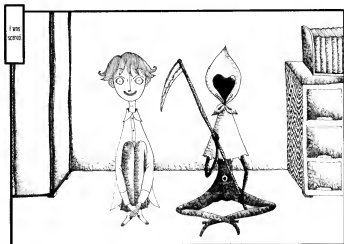
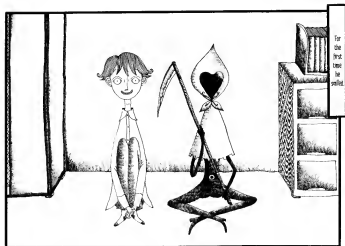


...You're  
going to  
die soon.  
It won't  
be long.







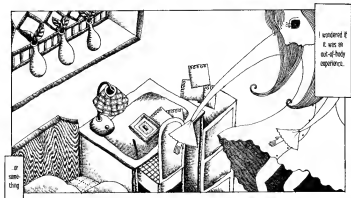
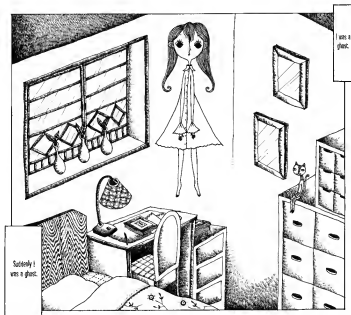


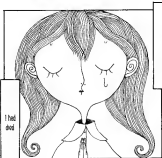
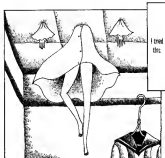
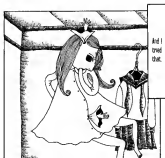
THE END





My  
Ghost





so I  
accepted  
my fate





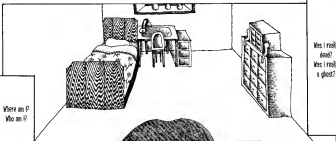
But I was gone  
I had died,  
but there  
was no body.

I had  
become  
a ghost  
of myself.



so I  
didn't  
feel  
like I'd  
died.

All I  
remembered  
was suddenly  
noticing I was  
a ghost.



Where am I?  
Who am I?

Was I really  
dead?  
Was I really  
a ghost?

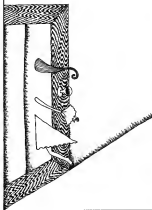
What...

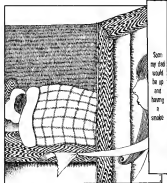
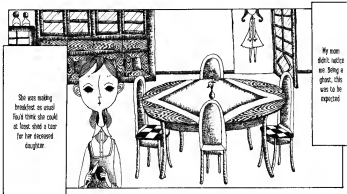


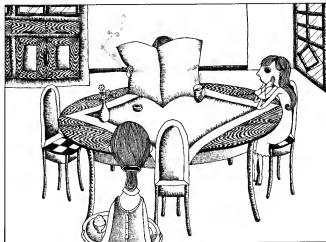
...am I?

If I was  
going to be  
a ghost, I  
had to make  
sure I was  
*really* dead.

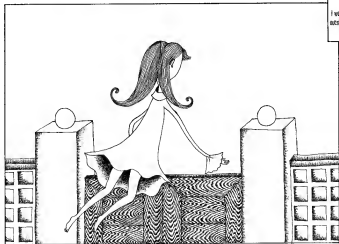
I had  
to find  
my  
body



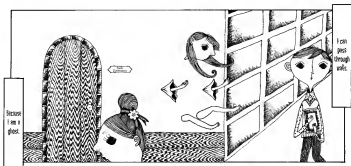




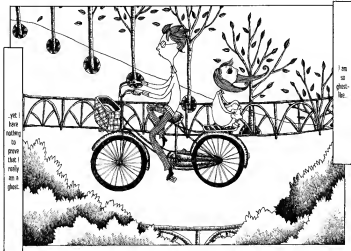
There  
was no  
sign  
that  
I had  
died



I went  
outside





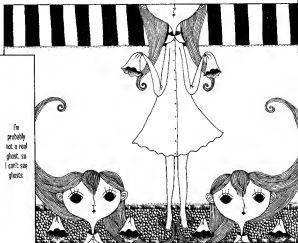




That  
isn't  
my  
husband

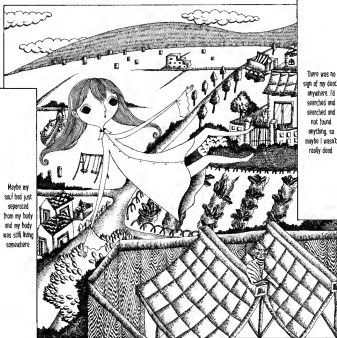


The  
flowers  
on the  
grave  
were  
cultural



I'm  
probably  
not a real  
ghost, so  
I can't see  
ghosts

There are lots  
of things I'd like  
to ask another  
ghost. If I saw  
one. Maybe this  
is how all  
ghosts are. But  
there are no  
other ghosts  
besides me

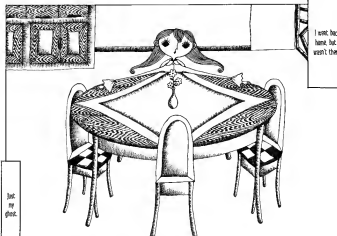


Maybe my  
soul had just  
separated  
from my body  
and my body  
was still living  
somewhere

There was no  
sign of my death  
anywhere. I'd  
searched and  
searched and  
not found  
anything, so  
maybe I wasn't  
really dead

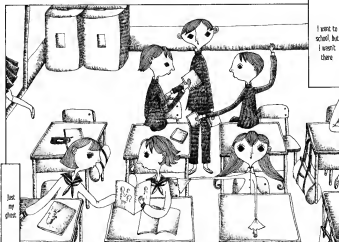


That  
didn't  
make  
me  
happy  
at all



I want back  
home, but I  
won't there

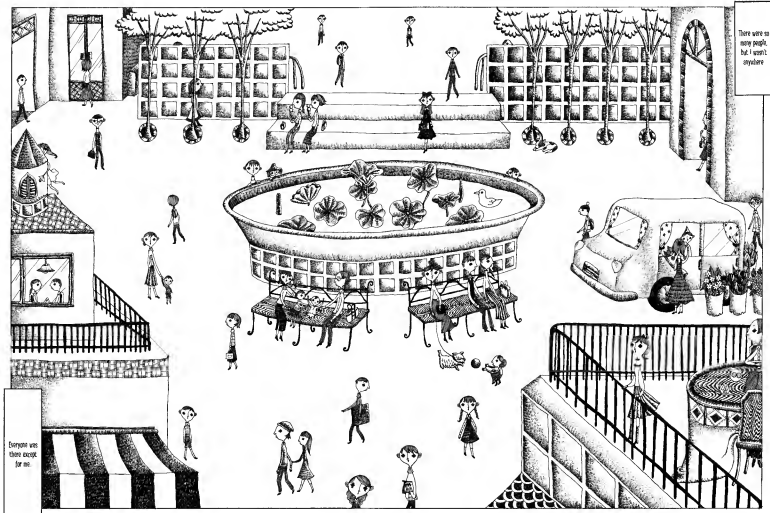
Just my  
ghost.



I want to  
school, but  
I won't  
there

Just my  
ghost.



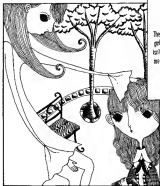


Everyone was  
there except  
for me.

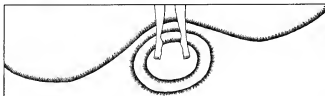
There were so  
many people,  
but I wasn't  
anywhere.



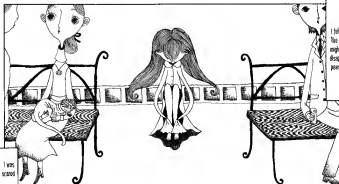
This girl isn't me, either.



This girl isn't me.



Will me, where am I?

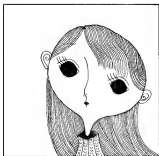


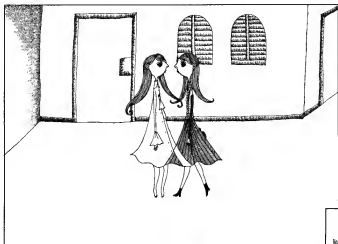
I was scared

I felt like I might disappear

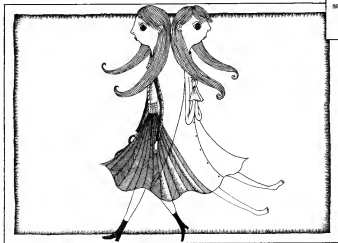


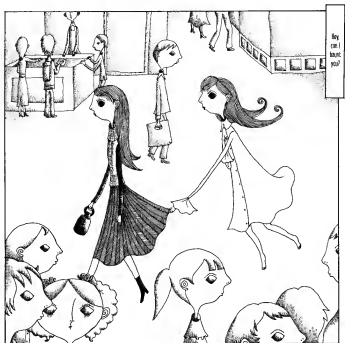






No, this's  
not me





THE END

A Creature with Eyes

A Creature with Eyes

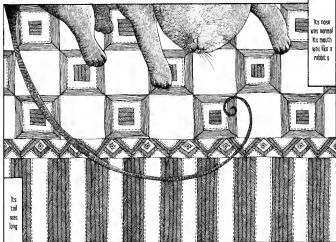
It didn't have ears like a rabbit, though. They must have been hidden in its fur somewhere, but they must have been highly developed, for it acted as if it were deaf.

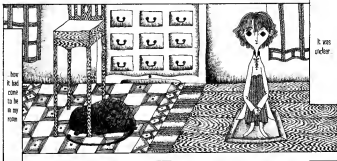


The animal looked like a giant rabbit.

Its nose was small. Its mouth was like a rabbit's.

Its tail was long.





...how  
it had  
come  
to be  
in my  
room

It was  
under



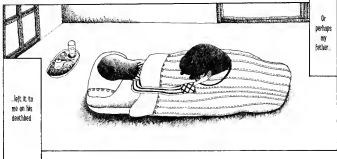
...and  
ended up  
staying

Or  
perhaps  
it stole  
the food  
I put out  
for the  
sparrows



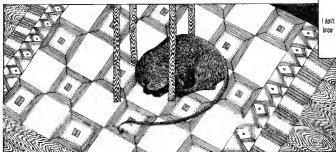
Maybe  
I had  
bought  
it at  
a pet  
shop

...thinking  
it to be  
a type of  
gumby pig



...left it to  
me on his  
deathbed

Or  
perhaps  
my father



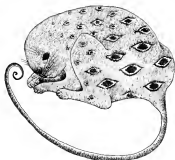
I don't  
know



At any rate,  
it lives in  
my bedroom.  
I feed it, but  
I don't really  
consider it  
a pet.

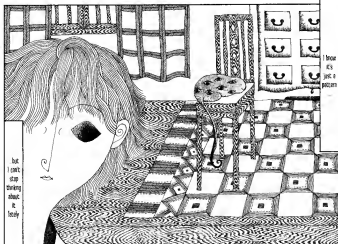
I've gotten  
used to its  
presence,  
though, and  
would feel a  
slight sense  
of distur-  
bance if it  
were to die.

The thing  
is, it had  
eyes. Its  
nose was  
normal and  
its mouth  
was a  
rabbit's  
mouth.



...but  
its  
whole  
body  
was  
covered  
in  
eyes

I knew  
it's  
just a  
puzzle



but  
I can't  
stop  
thinking  
about  
it,  
fooly





looking at me directly

It clearly avoided

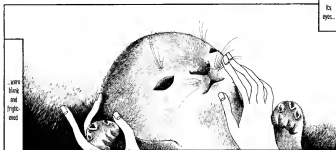


its real eyes were in the normal place where eyes should be, but it hated being looked in the eye.



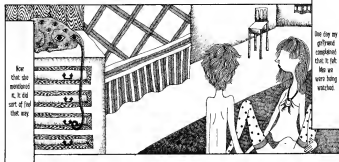
Maybe it was some sort of camouflage.

It squirmed unpleasantly when I tried to force it to look at me.



...were blank and frightened

its eyes...



Now  
that she  
mentioned  
it, it did  
sort of feel  
that way.

One day my  
girlfriend  
complained  
that it felt  
like we  
were being  
watched.

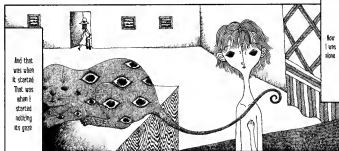


I didn't  
like her  
saying that.

I told  
her it  
wasn't her  
decision to  
make and  
break up  
with her.

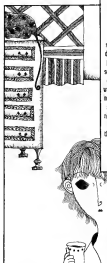


She  
said  
it was  
creepy,  
and we  
should  
get rid  
of it.



And that  
was when  
it started.  
That was  
when I  
started  
noticing  
its gaze.

Now  
I was  
alone.



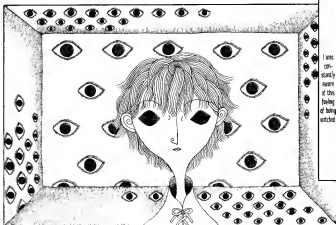
I'd suddenly feel  
someone  
watching me  
and notice  
it there



It never  
let me  
see it  
more



It had  
a par-  
ticular  
way of  
moving



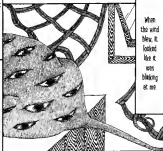
I was  
con-  
stantly  
aware  
of this  
feeling  
of being  
watched

Just  
sometimes  
it looked  
as if  
it were  
smiling  
and  
sometimes  
it looked  
as if it  
were about  
to cry



It must  
have  
been a  
trick  
of the  
light.

When  
the wind  
blew, it  
looked  
like it  
was  
blinking  
at me.



Though it  
had been  
living with  
me all this  
time, once  
I started  
noticing it,  
I couldn't  
stop



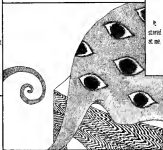
It was  
creaky  
I didn't  
like this  
feeling

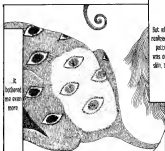
something  
you hate  
to have  
done to  
you



You  
shouldn't  
do

It  
stared  
at me



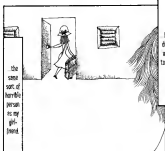


It  
bored  
me even  
more.

But when I  
realized the  
puzzam  
was on its  
skin, too...



I  
decided  
to show  
its fur

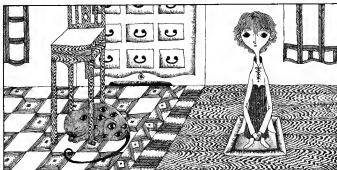


...the  
same sort of  
horrible  
person as my  
girl-  
friend.

But I  
didn't  
want  
to be...



I  
thought  
about  
getting  
rid of  
it...



One day  
I'd just  
suddenly  
had as  
much as  
I could  
take

That day,  
I took  
a magic  
marker

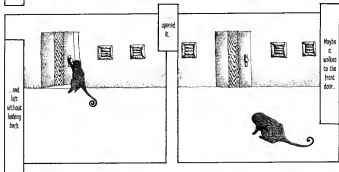
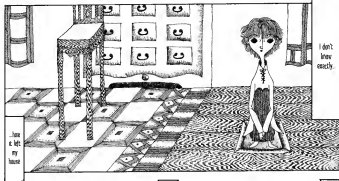
...and  
began  
coloring  
it pink.  
Mark

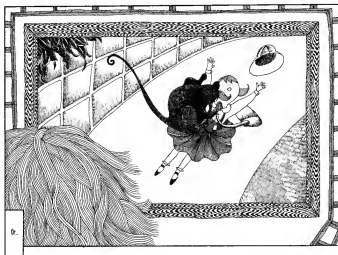
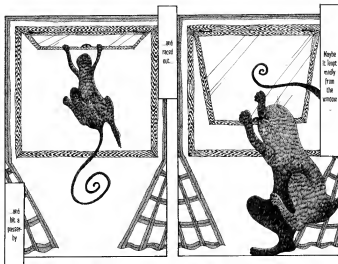
It  
looked  
at me

...but  
it just  
lay  
there  
quietly  
and  
let me  
color  
it.

I  
thought  
it would  
struggle  
at least  
a little

...with  
its sad  
eyes.

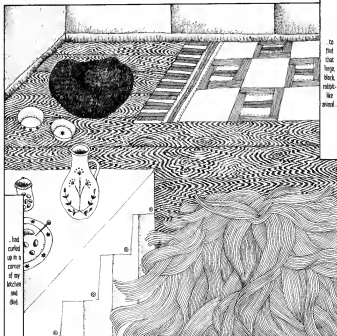






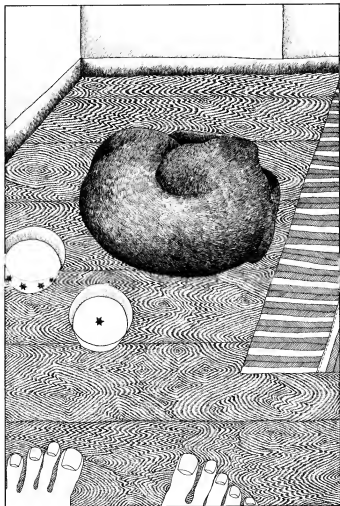


Maybe  
one morning  
I woke up.



to find  
that large,  
black,  
rabbit-  
like animal.

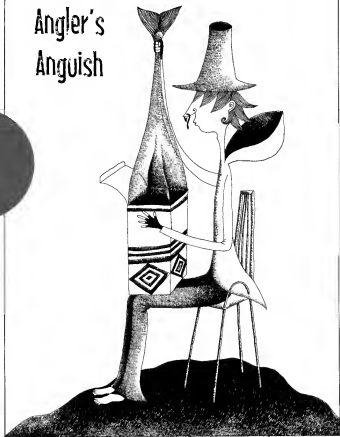
...had  
curled up in a  
corner  
of my  
kitchen  
and died.



Now  
I am  
Crazy  
alone.



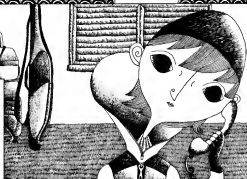
An  
Angler's  
Anguish



*Today's weather report for eastern  
 11 Prefecture calls for north winds  
 all day, with occasional strong gusts  
 from the south-west. It will be  
 sunny with occasional clouds, as  
 well as the possibility of rain or  
 possibly snow. Waves along the  
 coast range from 1-2.5 meters.*

You've  
 got  
 to be  
 kidding  
 me!

How am I  
 supposed  
 to go  
 fishing  
 with a  
 vague  
 weather  
 report  
 like that?



These fore-  
 casts are  
 worthless  
 in another  
 could do  
 better.

I'm sick  
 of their  
 forecasts.  
 My life  
 depends  
 on a  
 correct  
 forecast.



I don't know  
 what's up  
 with  
 the Meteorol-  
 ogy Agency  
 lately. The  
 forecast keeps  
 changing and  
 you can't even  
 find out the  
 day's weather  
 until five o'clock  
 that morning.



If I can  
just  
weather  
the  
wind,  
I'll be  
fine.



I'm both mentally  
and physically  
prepared, so I'm  
just going to  
trust my instinct  
as an angler  
and go out.



I got a  
face storm  
because  
I couldn't  
decide  
where to  
go. I might  
miss the  
boat.

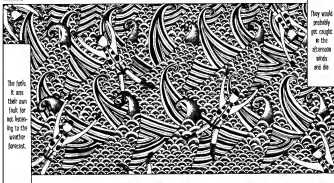
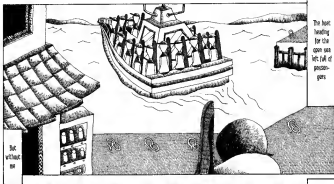
Carless  
anglers  
like me  
can only  
rely on  
our legs.



I run  
down  
the  
road  
with  
my  
heavy  
bags.

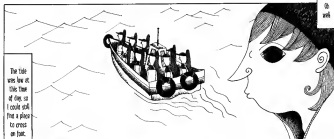


Sep. Watch Out for High Waves



Which unfortunately meant I arrived after the ferry across the canal had already left.

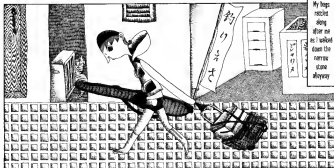
That's what I was thinking as I ran along, so my pace must have slowed.



Oh well.

The tide was low at this time of day, so I could still find a place to cross on foot.

My legs rocked along after me as I walked down the narrow stone alleyway.

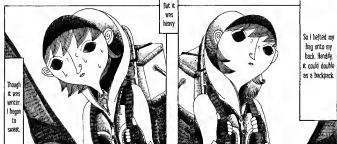


Inner Sat.





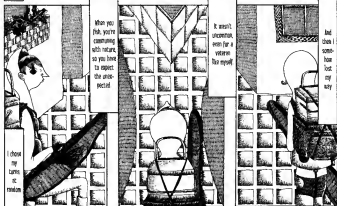
"It's too early for all this racket," a neighborhood woman scolded me.



Though it was winter, I began to sweat.

But it was heavy.

So I hefted my bag onto my back. Ideally, it could double as a backpack.



When you fish, you're communing with nature, so you have to expect the unexpected.

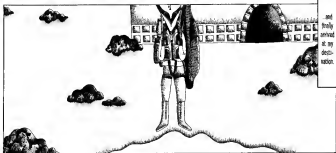
It wasn't unexpected, even for a veteran like myself.

And then I somehow lost my way.

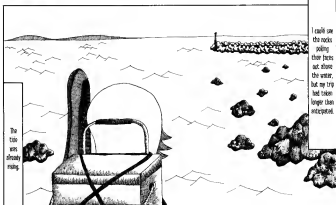
I chose my turns at random.



I made  
my way  
through  
a long  
under-  
ground  
passage.

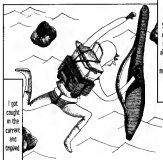


and  
finally  
arrived  
at my  
des-  
tina-  
tion.



I could  
see  
the rocks  
poking  
their  
heads  
above  
the water,  
but my trip  
had taken  
longer than  
anticipated.

The  
trip  
was  
already  
ending.



I got caught in the current and tripped

Some rocks were already submerged



I crashed quickly



I knew then that this would be an unpleasant fishing trip

Water filled my boots



Crocodiles are dangerous. You have to be extremely careful

I climbed up the tall crocodiles

Anators  
should stay  
away from  
tatrapods  
altogether.  
You need  
the right  
equipment  
to climb  
tatrapods.



I wonder  
how many  
kids have  
lost their  
toes this  
summer  
because of  
that song.



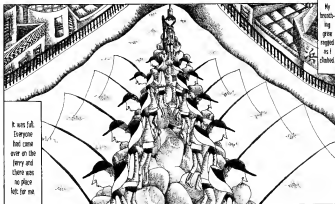
Some stupid  
singer had a  
song about  
getting up  
on the tat-  
rapods and  
licking off  
your shoes.

My  
water-  
logged  
boots  
squeaked  
loudly.

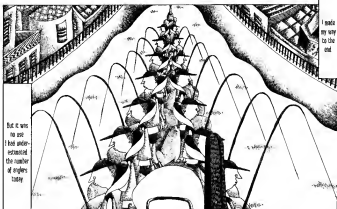


And who on  
earth talks about  
licking off their  
shoes? Shoes are  
the key to safety  
in Angler's life  
depends on them.

My  
breast-  
ing  
grew  
regret  
as I  
climbed.



It was fall.  
Everyone  
had come  
over on the  
ferry and  
there was  
no place  
left for me.



I made  
my way  
to the  
end.

But it was  
no use  
I had under-  
estimated  
the number  
of anglers  
today



I was  
at my  
wit's  
end.

I had  
no idea  
what  
to do



hanging  
down  
from  
the  
bridge  
over-  
head.



Then I  
saw a  
rope.



I  
climbed  
up the  
rope  
and  
went  
back to  
town.





The sun was now quite high in the sky.

The townspeople were already out and about.



Water must have gotten into it when I tripped and fell.

My watch had broken.



Sweat mingled with the water from my boots and formed a puddle beneath my feet.

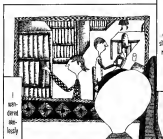
I was drenched in sweat.



It looked as if I had wet my pants.



I just  
wanted  
to rest.



I  
won-  
dered  
an-  
grily.

could  
sit and  
rest.



But  
there was  
nowhere  
in town  
where  
someone  
who  
looked  
as I did...



The  
north  
wind  
blew.

It was  
cold.



T-san was my subordinate at work, and was younger than me, and I had taught him to fish...



I decided to stop in at T-san's apartment to work up

I could relax around him



but he had a curious air about him which made me want to call him "son"



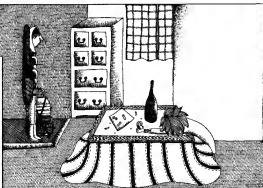
Apparently he'd had a fight with his landlord over a new refrigerator



I was surprised to see him drunk and available in the middle of the day



...but seeing  
how upset  
my usually  
calm friend  
was, the  
landlord  
must have  
been pretty  
harsh  
with her.



It was  
a huge  
bridge,  
much too  
big for  
this tiny  
apartment,  
so I could  
see the  
landlord's  
pent...

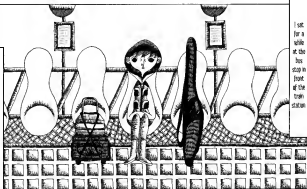
...so I  
quickly  
said  
good-  
bye  
and  
left.



I felt a little  
angry myself,  
but I didn't  
want to waste  
my day off  
like this, and  
it was hard  
seeing T-san  
so irritable...

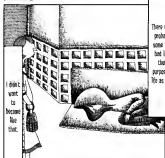


I tried to think of a way to save the day from being a total waste, but was stumped.



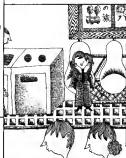
I sat for a while at the bus stop in front of the train station.

I didn't want to become like that.



There were probably some who had lost their purpose in life as well.

I looked around at the bustling crowd and saw others like myself, who had lost their purpose for the day.



But I was a little worried.



"A low table with a heat source (usually electric) underneath, covered with a quilt to retain the heat, used for keeping warm in the winter."



I suddenly felt like I'd been quite rude.

I wished I had stayed at T-sai's, tucked under the heater\* and drinking sake. He always listened to me gripe about work, so it wouldn't have done me any harm to listen to his complaints for once.



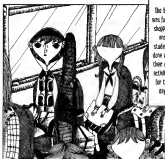
The sign said it was going to XX Heights.

A bus pulled up to the bus stop.



I'd heard about it many times from the bait shop I frequented, and I was pretty sure that was where I'd first gone fishing with T-sai.

I remembered that there was a little-known spot for sea bream fishing in XX Heights.



The bus  
was full of  
choppers  
and  
students  
done with  
their club  
activities  
for the  
day.



Feeling like  
this was  
a happy  
collection,  
I hopped  
on the bus.



The  
cold  
north  
wind  
felt  
good.

Feeling  
hot, I  
opened  
the  
window.



But the  
schoolgirl  
behind me  
looked  
annoyed,  
so I closed  
the window.



The bus  
made its  
way up  
the wide,  
hilly road.

I got  
off at  
the last  
stop

Most  
of the  
other pas-  
sengers  
were res-  
idents.



There had  
only been  
a few houses  
here and there  
before, but at  
some point  
it had become  
a large residential  
area.

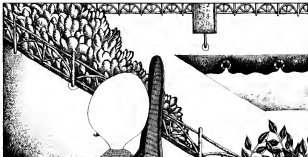
Each house  
represented  
the blood, sweat,  
and tears of some  
shareholder,  
toiling day  
after day to  
provide for  
his family

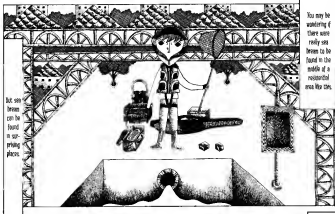


Last  
in  
thought



I  
wandered  
through the  
unfamiliar  
scenery  
and I  
finally  
arrived at  
the fishing  
hole.





But sea  
beams  
can be  
found  
in sur-  
prising  
places.

You may be  
wondering if  
there were  
really sea  
beams to be  
found in the  
middle of a  
recreational  
area like this.



...but a  
little  
murkiness  
was just  
fine.

The  
water  
was a  
muddy  
brown.



Thinking it  
must be  
evening  
by now, I  
prepared  
for night  
fishing.

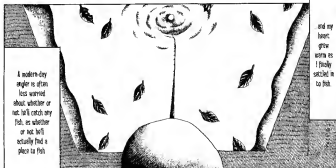
My watch  
was broken  
and the sky  
had clouded  
over, so I  
had no idea  
what time  
it was.

めい  
ご  
と  
は  
さ  
ば  
な  
い

Sign: Good kids don't play here



I gave  
my beloved  
rod a  
swing.



A modern-day  
angler is often  
less worried  
about whether or  
not he'll catch any  
fish, as whether  
or not he'll  
actually find a  
place to fish

and my  
bait  
grew  
worms as  
I finally  
settled in  
to fish.



Night fell and  
lights began to  
appear in the  
surrounding  
houses as  
families  
gathered for  
the last time  
on this  
weekend.

Tomorrow  
will  
be  
work

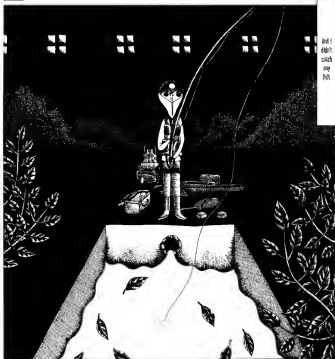


My face felt frozen.



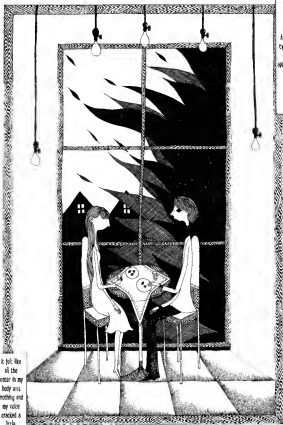
There was no south-west wind.

And I didn't catch any fish.



THE END

# Sad Love Story



A huge  
cython  
was  
approach-  
ing.

It felt like  
all the  
water in my  
body was  
frothing and  
my voice  
cracked a  
little.

I forgot what  
we were  
talking about  
even as we  
spoke. It was  
probably  
partly the  
typhoon's  
fault.



I was talking  
with the girl  
I love

My  
mouth  
moved  
on its  
own



and  
thinking  
"is  
this  
is  
love"



...but  
I was  
also  
just  
sitting  
there  
gazing  
at her  
face.



"I want to  
show you  
something  
at 8:00  
tomorrow  
morning"



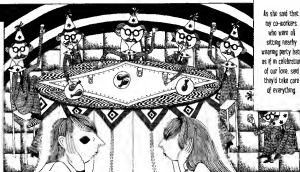
Her  
mouth  
opened

"Can't you  
just let your  
co-workers  
pick up the  
slack?"  
she asked



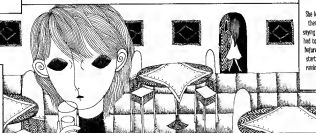
"I can't. I  
have work  
tomorrow,"  
I answered

I thanked them  
and they elected  
loudly at that  
moment, I could  
see myself  
marrying this girl  
I felt so happy



As she said that  
my co-workers  
who were all  
sitting nearby  
wearing party hats  
as if in celebration  
of our love, said  
they'd take care  
of everything.

I kept  
drinking  
feeling  
early  
happy



She left  
then,  
saying she  
had to go  
before it  
started  
raining.

I made my  
way home in  
the pouring  
rain, sloshing  
through  
water up to  
my knees.



It was  
the  
middle  
of the  
night.

We hadn't decided on a meeting place, so at 9.00 AM I went back to the bar we'd been to last night.

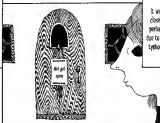


It was bright and sunny after the typhoon passed.

A bar like this would never be open this early in the first place.



But after thinking about it, I realized...



It was closed, perhaps due to the typhoon.

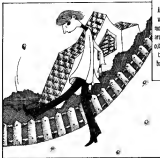
I discovered climbing it wasn't meant to be.



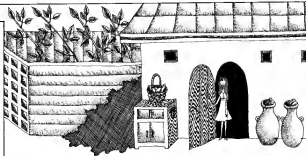
I was at my wits' end.



I was  
feeling  
terribly  
sad.



As I  
was  
looking  
around  
outside  
the  
bar...



"So I was  
right  
after all,"  
I thought,  
feeling  
the depth  
of our  
bond.

the  
back  
door  
opened  
and  
the girl  
beckoned  
to me



I felt  
coolly  
happy



I  
followed  
her into  
the bar

She led  
me into  
the  
new  
parlor.



She and I had  
been to this bar  
before several  
times and I had  
thought myself  
familiar with it,  
so I was unsure  
of what to  
make of the  
unfamiliar sight  
before my eyes.

They called me over and I sat down with them.

Men wearing some sort of traditional clothing I'd never seen before sat around the table.

The language they spoke was similar to Japanese and I could make out a few words, but I had no idea what they were saying.

Apparently they were of a different race.

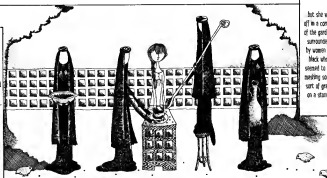
I looked to the girl for help...

I wanted to be nearby, but I felt like running away.

But I could tell that they were attacking me for something. They looked at me as if I were a thief!

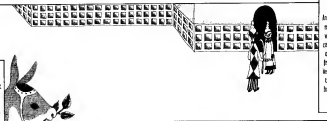


She seemed so distant, it made me sad.



but she was off in a corner of the garden, surrounded by women in black who seemed to be making some sort of grain on a stove.

and he sat down next to me.



An old man was called out from inside the bar.

I told him that I was serious about this girl and wanted to marry her, that I didn't care that we were of different races, and that I would do my best to respect their culture.



He could speak Japanese. He must have learned it during the war.

Maybe that was why I failed to evoke a response from the group.



I thought I had been very elegant, but my memory was vague and I couldn't really get a good grasp on the situation.



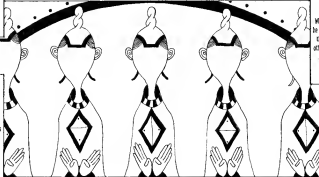
The old man told the others.

I told him we had never even held hands. I wanted to be clear on this point.



Grinning, the old man asked about our physical relationship.

...their suspicious expressions turned friendly.



When he told the others.

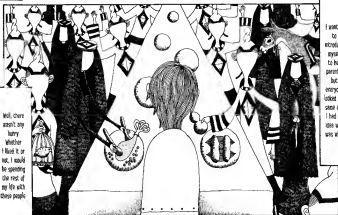


Lines of  
celebration  
filled  
the air.



It  
seemed  
our  
marriage  
had been  
recreated.

...and  
they  
looked  
out the  
sake

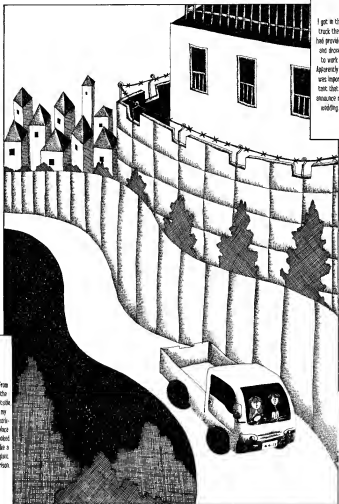


Well, there  
aren't any  
hurry  
whether  
I need it or  
not, I would  
be spending  
the rest of  
my life with  
these people

I wanted  
to  
introduce  
myself  
to her  
parents,  
but  
everyone  
looked the  
same and  
I had no  
idea who  
was who

I got in the truck they had provided and drove to work. Apparently it was important that I announce my arrival.

From the outside, my workplace looked like a giant prison.

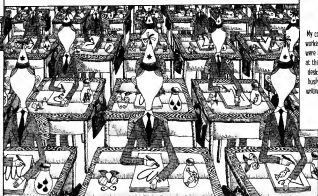


What a  
bitchess.  
Marriage  
was a  
one-in-  
a-lifetime  
event.



I went to  
tell my boss  
he was in a  
bad mood.  
Apparently  
he didn't  
like that I'd  
missed work  
without  
calling in.

They  
were  
probably  
just  
doodling  
as usual.  
My job  
certainly  
seemed  
unfulfilling.



My co-  
workers  
were all  
at their  
desks  
busily  
writing.

Now that  
I realized  
this was  
an office  
romance...



Oh, so  
we'd meet  
at work.



Then I  
looked  
over to  
see her  
straight-  
ening her  
desk.

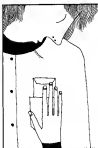
I understood how he felt, but I didn't want him involved in my private affairs, and this was all very sudden for me, so I really had no idea what was going on myself!



...my boss' attitude made more sense. He'd probably wanted to be the match-maker.

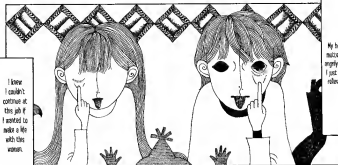


This seemed like the right time, so I handed it over.



For some reason there was a feeling of resignation in my pocket.

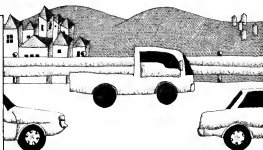
Envelope (letter of resignation)



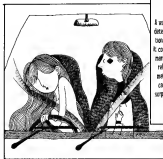
I knew I couldn't continue at this job if I wanted to make a life with this woman.

My boss muttered angrily but I just felt relieved.

but my hometown was quite far away and we'd have to take the bullet train, so I told her she'd have to wait a while



She said she wanted to meet my parents. Since we were getting married, it wasn't an odd request, and I don't really mind.

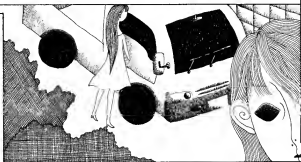


A woman's determination when it comes to marriage-related matters can be surprising.



She fell silent and kept driving.

Now that I thought about it, there was a quicker way to get there, but I wondered how she'd know about it.



Before I knew it, we had arrived in my hometown.

At a glance,  
it seemed  
like nothing  
had changed,  
but for some  
reason the  
town seemed  
smaller than  
before.



...as I  
walked  
with her  
through  
the  
familiar  
scenery



I couldn't shake the feeling that I was doing something wrong.

When we reached my parents' house, I felt eerie in the knees.

I didn't know how to tell these two old people who had always been so concerned about my career and my marriage that I had quit my job and was marrying a girl. I hardly knew anything about.

Over the hedge I could see my parents, now grown quite old, playing with the cat and smiling with their old-people faces.

I had a feeling I'd never talk to them again, and felt very sad.

In the end we didn't talk to them.

It was  
the  
first  
time  
we'd  
held  
hands.



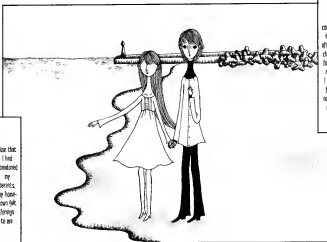
The  
two  
of  
us  
walked  
along  
the  
beach.

It was  
amazing.



My  
palm  
was  
very  
swampy.

Now that  
I had  
abandoned  
my  
parents,  
my home-  
town felt  
foreign  
to me.



I had  
come here  
to fish  
after my  
child, but  
for some  
reason  
I wasn't  
feeling  
nostalgic  
at all.

It seemed to me like this sort of thing was particular to people who hadn't been raised by the sea



She played in the surf!

For the first time, she seemed lovely to me

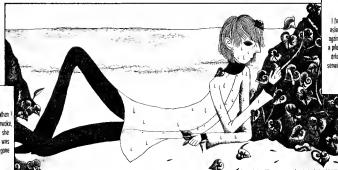


I felt like maybe this wasn't so bad



This was how I would get to know her better

When I looked, she was gone



I fell asleep against a pile of driftwood

I'd quit  
my job  
and  
thrown  
away  
my past.



I was  
worried.

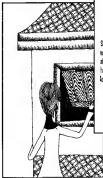
...such  
attach-  
ment  
to any-  
thing



I  
thought  
dis-  
tantly  
that  
I had  
never  
felt...



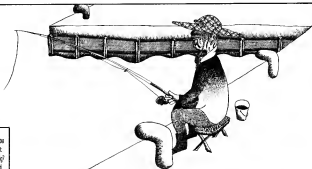
I  
searched  
for her  
desper-  
ately



She  
was  
all I  
had  
left.



She  
was  
neither  
to be  
found.



There was an old man fishing on the embankment.

Have you caught anything? I asked.



No, we've caught nothing else for years.

Nothing but mackerel?



Nothing but mackerel!



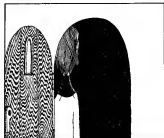
I felt overcome by despair.

(A. Kurohagi)

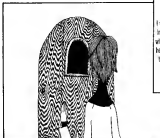
Box, Kurohagi Fishery

This  
was  
where  
it all  
started

I wandered  
in single  
and I came  
to that bar

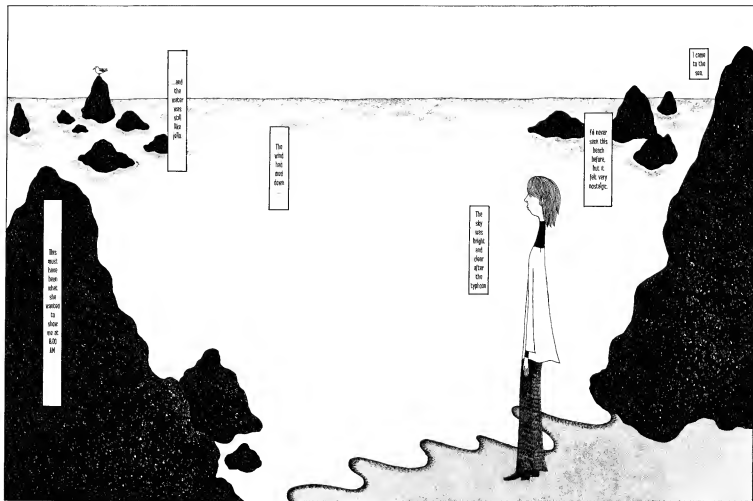


I went  
inside  
without  
hesita-  
tion.



I  
walked  
down  
a long,  
dark  
corri-  
dor.





It's  
must  
have  
been  
about  
the  
wanted  
to  
show  
me  
at  
8.00  
AM

...and  
the  
water  
was  
still  
like  
jelly

The  
wind  
had  
died  
down  
—

The  
sky  
was  
bright  
and  
clear  
after  
the  
typhoon

I'd  
never  
seen  
this  
beach  
before,  
but  
it  
felt  
very  
nostalgic.

I  
came  
to  
the  
sea.

I noticed for the first time that there were lots of little plants growing up through the sand.

I walked along the beach.

I saw a large wooden box at the edge of the water.

At that moment...

...one of the mysteries of this curious tale becomes clear.

This wasn't a love story.

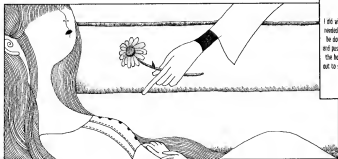




The girl was lying inside the box, dead.



Rose I understood everything



I did what  
needed to  
be done  
and pushed  
the boat  
out to sea



The  
water  
seemed  
to stick  
to my  
legs.



It was just  
the two of  
us, just me  
and this  
corpse that  
would almost  
certainly not  
bloom I did.

heading  
out to  
sea.



Surprisingly, I  
weren't  
sad.



I weren't sad  
anywhere  
Only my heart,  
somewhere far  
away from  
here, was sad.

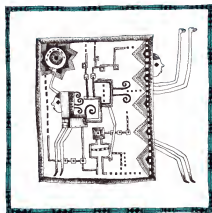
THE END

Life Has  
its Ups  
and  
Downs





*I can't hear anything*



*Tick-tack tick-tack tick-tack..*



*He is desperately trying to grow flowers.*



*Don't go.*



*Don't dance in front of me*



*You'll never be happy in there*





*I can't take it anymore*



*This is life*



*No one's home*



*You can't trust her*

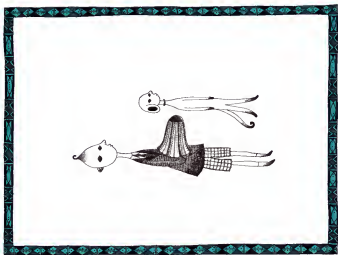


*You can't really call this a good thing.*



*I hate it.*

*Yes, I hate it.*



*I'm not dead.*